



Town of Westford Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

February 2020



Jodi Ross,
Town
Manager

jross@westfordma.gov
www.westfordma.gov/tm

Important:

Please sign up to
receive updates on the
latest road construction
in town.

[Subscribe to
Notifications](#)



Sign up for Westford's
new Emergency
Notification service:
[Smart 911](#)

Community Gardens
Registration is open
through March 15
See page 8

Annual Town Meeting
Saturday, March 28, 10 AM
Abbot School Gymnasium



Watch
Meetings Online
westford CAT
community access television
www.westfordcat.org

Dear Westford residents,

Our Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2020 at 10:00AM in the Abbot School Gymnasium. The Board of Selectmen closed the warrant on January 28th and is currently in the process of making recommendations on warrant articles. All of the documents are available online at the following link: [2020 Annual Town Meeting](#).

Early voting for the Presidential Primary will be available at our Town Hall between February 24th and February 28th during normal business hours. Nomination papers for our Annual Town Election are available in the Town Clerk's Office in Town Hall, 55 Main Street. The deadline for submissions is March 17th, 2020 and our Annual Town Election is on May 5th, 2020. You may view what positions are available at this link: [Open Positions and Candidates](#).

The Stormwater Management Utility Fee and Credit Policy was recently updated to add additional information relative to private roads, non-single family residential (NSFR) properties, gravel surfaces, and bill and credit adjustments. You may view the updated policy at this link: [Stormwater Management Utility Fee and Credit Policy - Amended February 11, 2020](#). If you have any questions about the policy, you are welcome to contact Paul Starratt, P.E., Town Engineer at pstarratt@westfordma.gov or 978-399-2716.

At the last Selectmen's meeting, our Permanent Town Building Committee presented updated building plans, site plans, and courtyard options for the New Center Building at 51 Main Street. The updated cost estimates are due at the end of the month and additional public meetings will begin shortly.

The Board of Selectmen has been hearing updates from the WestfordCAT board at their meetings, and providing input to the WCAT board as they discuss their financial situation and determine future actions. According to Selectman Clay, the WCAT board is concentrating on increasing community engagement through participation in a task force to explore new opportunities for fund raising and programming mix, along with looking at longer term structure. Currently they are maintaining level funding and have extended an offer to the News Director to remain on board. WCAT encourages applications from community members for task force participation and board membership to fill a number of upcoming board vacancies over the next 3-4 months. Interested parties may send inquiries to Nancy Burns at nancy@nancyburns.com.

On January 28th the board received an update from the 35 Town Farm Task Force relative to their recommendation to locate the new fire training facility at 30 Beacon Street. The Task Force met with the abutters of the site and determined that they would keep searching for a new location and return to the board on May 12, 2020.

(Continued on next page)

WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV

I am excited to report that our New England Merrimack Reserve Corp (MRC) was featured in the National MRC Monthly Report for December. The report featured CPR training of town staff (photo on right.) Also, our MRC collaborated with FEMA to host the nation's first pilot program of OPEN in Lowell on February 13th. Registrations reached 47 and two of our staff members from the Cameron Senior Center participated. The programs seeks to help "community-based organizations" take steps to be able to resume operations as soon as possible after a disaster.



Water Department Staff Participate in CPR Training

Our Westford Annual Town Report for Fiscal Year 2019 is now published and copies are available at town offices and [online here](#). The books will also be available at our Annual Town Meeting. I would like to thank Lynn Cohen, Ellen Harde, and Emily Teller who helped compile our report!

After 39 years of service to our town, Licensed Well Specialist Chris Macpherson recently retired. Since Chris began working in the Water Department, the Department has added approximately 34 miles of water main to the town's system, installed over 1,200 new water services, replaced the Prospect Hill water storage tank, and constructed the Nutting Road and Forge Village water treatment facilities. The board, Water Commissioners, Steve Cronin, Water Superintendent, and I thanked Chris for his many years of dedicated service and wished him well in retirement.

The selectmen and I thanked Alan Bugos for 12 years of service to Westford as a member of the Recycling Commission. During Alan's time, amongst many projects, he was dedicated to updating the Recycling Commission website, writing the Commission's Town Report submission, and compiling and reporting data on trash and recycling statistics in an effort to track changes over time for town use.

Congratulations to our Fire Department staff, Michael Denehy on his promotion to Captain, and David Lefebvre on his promotion to Lieutenant. I am also pleased to welcome John Johnson who is our new van driver for the Council on Aging.

There are several openings on our local boards and committees, including: 12 North Main Street Task Force, 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, Affordable Housing Committee, Agricultural Commission, Commission on Disability, Communications Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Cultural Council, Election Officer, Energy Committee, Fence Viewer, Healthy Westford Committee, Historical Commission, Parkerville Schoolhouse Committee, Parks, Grounds and Recreation Commission, Pedestrian Safety Committee, Permanent Town Building Committee, Recycling Commission, Westford Scholarship and Grant Committee, and Zoning Board of Appeals. I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees; and if you have interest, please complete a Citizen's Activity form at this link: [Citizen Activity Form](#).

Would you like more detailed information on Board of Selectmen meetings? Click the following links to access: [Board of Selectmen Documents](#) & [Board of Selectmen Meeting Videos](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jodi Ross".

Jodi Ross
Town Manager

February at the J.V. Fletcher Library

Our programs are generously funded by the Friends of the J.V. Fletcher Library, Inc.



The [New Library Web site](#) and [Mobile App](#) are Live! The Library has unveiled a [new website](#) that is intuitive and simple to navigate. This initiative was funded in part by gift and grant funds and by the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc.

The Library also has a [new mobile app](#) that makes it easy to digitally browse the library's collection, view your checkouts, place holds, and renew items. Search for **MVLC Mobile** in the Apple and Android stores.

[Kanopy – New Streaming Movie Service!](#) Westford patrons now have access to [Kanopy](#), a streaming movie service that offers thousands of classic films, documentaries, independent films, and The Great Courses. [Kanopy Kids](#) offers award winning family-friendly movies, TV series, documentaries, and classic films. Westford patrons can stream ten films per month. Once a film is checked out, you will have access to it for three days. Stream [Kanopy](#) on your computer, or download the app to your smart TV or mobile device.

Strategic Plan Focus Group: Monday, March 23 at 7 PM: We need your feedback. This is an opportunity to share your input as the Board of Library Trustees and Library staff embark on the new three-year Library Strategic Plan, mandated by the state, and due in late 2020. The Library is looking toward the future and seeks your assistance in shaping our vision. No registration required. Light refreshments will be served. Please join us!

Sunday Hours: Resumed in January and run thru Sun., April 26. On Sundays the Library is open from 2 to 5 p.m.

For Tweens and Teens - SUPER SMASH BROS. TOURNAMENT: Wednesday, February 19, 1:30 to 5 PM: presented by One Up Games. Come eat snacks and compete for Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place! All equipment provided. Kids in grades 5-9 [register here](#).

Frozen Party with Elsa: Tuesday, February 20 at 11 a.m. Elsa from one of your favorite Disney movies will be here to dance, tell a story with interactive play, sing songs, and play games. Tickets (\$2.00) for children and adults are available by phone or in person. This program is best for ages four and up.

For Teens and Tweens - RUBBER DUCKIE SOAPS: Thursday, February 20, 4 to 5 PM: Make your own soapy creation with guest artist Gariné Arakelian using colors, glitter, and scents. Kids in grades 5-9 [register here](#).

Cookbook Club: Thursday, February 20 at 7 p.m. We explore cookbooks and sample new recipes. We meet on the third Thursday of the month. Our February pick is Bigger Bolder Baking by Gemma Stafford. Copies are available at Main Desk. If you would like to bring a dish from the cookbook (not required), call Sarah Regan at 978-399-2309. No registration required.

J.V. Fletcher Adult Book Club: Thu., Feb. 20 (Please note date change) at 7:30 p.m. Please join us to discuss *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult. Copies are available at the Main Desk. New members are always welcome. No registration required. [Check out our Reading List](#).

Lego® Club: Saturday, February 22 from 2 to 3 p.m. Come create something fun with Library Legos®. All creations will be displayed in the library until the next time we meet. Free drop-in for ages 5 and up with parent or caregiver.

Monday Mystery Book Club: Monday, February 24 at 10:30 a.m. Wake up your week with a stimulating book discussion! We meet on the fourth Monday morning of the month @ 10:30 a.m. in the Mary Atwood Room. Our Feb. selection is *Two Kinds of Truth* by Michael Connelly. Copies are available for check-out at the Main Desk. New members always welcome. Drop in. [Check out our Reading List](#).

How to Pay the College Bill: Thursday, February 27 at 6:30 p.m. That college bill will be here soon. How will you pay? Financial advisor T. Jack Wang will review your different options, including federal loans, private loans, payment plans and more. Decide what's best for your family, and your retirement! Intended for parents of high school seniors. FREE! [Register here](#) or call 978-399-2304.

Ukulele Strum Along: Saturday, February 29 at 2 p.m. Back by popular demand! For the beginner ukulele player who wants to practice and play music with others. Bring your own ukulele or [register here](#) or call the Information Dept. at 978-399-2304 to borrow one. Open to adults and teens. Singing is encouraged. FREE!

Town Clerk's Corner



Early Voting will be offered for the Presidential Primaries the week of February 24 – 28th only at the Town Hall during business hours of 8 am – 4 pm.

Absentee ballot applications are available now. Please remember that state law says absentee ballots are for those voters who are unable to vote at the polls due to absence from town during polling hours, disability, or religious beliefs.

Presidential Primary: Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Annual Town Meeting: Saturday, March 28, 2020

Annual Town Election: Tuesday, May 5, 2020



Nomination papers for the **May 5, 2020 Town Election** are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

Town News Subscription Manager



Notify Me®

The town's website can notify subscribers of new items.

Please visit www.westfordma.gov/list.aspx and follow the simple instructions to sign up for the various feeds available. You will receive email from us to confirm each thing you sign up for, and you need to click the link in each of those emails before it will start working. This confirmation process provided security ensuring that only you can change your notification settings.

While visiting the website consider setting up a profile account. This allows you to gather feeds from the website into a custom portal and as we implement some of the new features of the site you will be able to save data and track the progress of your interactions with the town.

Town Clerk's Corner

2020 Motor Vehicle Excise bills issued February 7th and due on March 9th.

There Are Many Ways To Pay:

- Pay Online using the Town's online bill pay provider, City Hall Systems. Go to the town's website, www.westfordma.gov, select Pay and Look Up Bills from the home page and then choose Pay Tax Bills on the right. Online users of City Hall Systems can create a User ID to allow them to make payments more quickly, schedule payments for a future date, see payment transaction history, and sign up for E-Billing, which would help us go green!
- Mail payments to Tax Collector's Office, 55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886
- Drop your check and bill stub in the Drop Box located at the town hall on the left side of the driveway just before the parking lot. (Please do not leave cash)
- Office Hours are 8am to 4pm Monday through Friday (Please note Monday February 17th is the President's Day Holiday and the office will be closed)
- Pay using your own bank's online bill pay system - be sure to update reference information so that your payment gets applied correctly! Best reference - Year, Tax Type and Bill Number (2020, MVE, Bill #).

If you no longer own the vehicle for which you have received an excise tax bill, you should contact the Assessor's office to apply for an abatement. Abatement applications are available on the town's website under the Board of Assessors page. We recommend that you pay the bill and then apply for an abatement to avoid late fees and penalties on any balances that are not abated. **Assessor's phone number 978/692-5504.**

Question we hear every year, "Why is the bill so high on my old car?" The amount of excise tax that is attributed to each vehicle is based upon a formula that begins with the list price of the vehicle when it was new. The excise tax is calculated by taking the list price value at a certain percentage, which depends on the age of the car, and multiplying that adjusted value by \$25 per thousand. Here's the table that the Registry of Motor Vehicles uses:

Age of Vehicle	Calc %	Example of Tax Calculation for a List Price of \$35,000
In the year of manufacture:	90%	$\$35,000 \times 90\% = \$31,500$, $31.50 \times \$25 = \787.50
In the second year:	60%	$\$35,000 \times 60\% = \$21,000$, $21.00 \times \$25 = \525.00
In the third year:	40%	$\$35,000 \times 40\% = \$14,000$, $14.00 \times \$25 = \350.00
In the fourth year:	25%	$\$35,000 \times 25\% = \$8,750$, $8.75 \times \$25 = \218.75
In the fifth & succeeding years	10%	$\$35,000 \times 10\% = \$3,500$, $3.50 \times \$25 = \87.50

Once your car is five years old or older, the excise tax amount does not change anymore, no matter how long the car is on the road and no matter what the actual value of the car. If you have an old car that was very expensive when it was new, and a newer car that is more economical, it is possible to pay a higher excise tax bill on the older car than you are paying on your new car. More information about excise tax can be found on the Town's website, www.westfordma.gov, on the Tax Collector's page. Click on the Motor Vehicle Excise Information tab on the left. I hope this information is helpful to you!

Cameron Senior Center

Come Join us at the Cameron

Many opportunities for adults age 55 and older...

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST - MONDAY, MARCH 9—SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE CAMERON

Please join us at 9 am as we welcome The Honorable Andrew L. Mandell, Justice of the District Court, Middlesex County. If you have a question for Judge Mandell, please give it to Katie by Friday, March 6. Please RSVP at 978-692-5523.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PRESENTATION – TUESDAY, MARCH 10

Join us from 1—2 pm for a slide show about the property tax exemptions that exist to see if you may qualify for some assistance. A representative from the Tax Collector's Office and the Senior Low Income and Disabled Tax Relief Committee (SLIDTR) will be present to answer questions. If you are legally blind, receive Social Security Disability, have a Veteran service-connected disability or are a senior and low income than you may be eligible for some property tax relief. We will also discuss the Stormwater Management Program and fees. Please call 978-692-5523 to register.

UNDERSTANDING MEDICARE 2020 TUESDAY, MARCH 10

Are you turning 65, planning to retire or just want to learn more about Medicare? Join us: Tuesday, March 10 at 10 am for a one-hour informational meeting presented by Fallon Health. You'll learn about the four parts of Medicare, how to enroll in Medicare, when you can change plans during the year, how to obtain prescription drug assistance and more. Space may be limited. Please sign up at 978-692-5523.

WATER AEROBICS CLASS being held at WestFit NEW!

Starting on Wednesday, March 4 at 10:15 am

Instructor: Diane Grey Cost: \$25 for 4 weeks

Our Aqua Aerobics class is an hour-long high-energy class with a community feel to the group. The class will start with 5 minutes of warm-up and stretching. Then you will go into 20 -25 min aerobic portion to get the heart rate up. Students will use bar bells for an arm workout by using the resistance of the water to build muscle and tone the arms. The class can be modified for anyone with hand/wrist/shoulder problems. Buoyancy belts and noodles are available for going to the deep end of the pool to work on range of motion. People who are uncomfortable in deep water, can stay in the shallow section if desired. The class finishes with 8-10 minutes of stretching and cool down exercises. Please sign up at 978-692-5523.

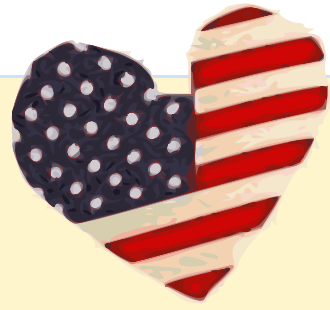
HELP OFFERED WITH CENSUS – FRIDAY, MARCH 13

Once a decade, America comes together to count every resident in the United States, creating national awareness of the importance of the census and its valuable statistics. The decennial census was first taken in 1790, as mandated by the [Constitution](#). It counts our population and households, providing the basis for [reapportioning congressional seats](#), redistricting, and distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to support states, counties and communities' vital programs impacting housing, education, transportation, employment, health care, and public policy. We will be hosting online help with completing your census on Friday, **March 13 from 10-2 pm** and on **April 14 from 4-7 pm**. Any questions call Annette at 978-399-2326.

To view the complete Council On Aging Newsletter please visit our website:

www.westfordma.gov/coa and click on [Newsletters](#).

Cameron Senior Center (continued)



VETERANS SOCIAL facilitated by Terry Stader **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 -**

SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE CAMERON

8:30—9:30 am All veterans are invited to come and socialize with other veterans at the Cameron Senior Center. We can discuss benefits, programs and other resources available to veterans locally. All topics are fair game. Coffee and pastries maybe provided. No need to RSVP; just come!

LUNCH AND LEARN FRIDAY, MARCH 27

Don't miss LUNCH and Learn

March 27- 12 pm

CALLING ALL KNITTERS! Knit hats for the troops. **Noella Boudreau**, formerly from Hampton, NH recently moved to Westford and is one of our newest members. She invites you to learn more about knitting hats for the troops when they're deployed out of Pease Air Base in Portsmouth, NH. With the help of an amazing group of loving men and women called Pease Greeters, these hats, among other things, are given to each soldier before they leave for overseas duty. Noella has personally knitted over 700 hats herself and when she and her husband wintered in Florida, she started a knitting group there. Combined they've made over 3,000 hats! Let's show our patriotic pride and find out how you can knit some hats yourself.

2019 INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

Hal Schreiber, our volunteer tax expert, will be back this year to complete your 2019 federal and state income tax returns. Due to the large number of tax returns being prepared at the Senior Center, Dick Severyn will also be back to assist Hal. This is a free service sponsored by your Senior Center and there are no age or income limits. Please call the Senior Center at 978-692-5523 to schedule an appointment. Hal has all the federal and state tax forms that are needed to be filled out – you do not need to bring any blank tax forms with you.

2021 SENIOR AND VETERANS TAX WORK PROGRAM

Tax Work applications are available at the Cameron Senior Center. Please apply if you are interested in participating in this program to work in a Town department in exchange for \$1,500.00 (minus federally mandated deductions) reduction in your FY 2021 real estate tax bill. You must submit a NEW application if you are interested in being placed this year, even if you have participated in the past. We will be using a lottery for first time applicants and then repeat applicants. Applicants must be 60+ years old, own and occupy the property for which Westford taxes are paid. Those with a signed medical exemption can assign a family member or friend to do the work for them. Only one member of a household is eligible. Applications must be submitted to the Senior Center by May 1st. The lottery will take place in May. If you have questions about the program or need a medical exemption form, please call Alison Christopher at 978-399-2325. The Veteran's Tax Work Program has the same criteria, but applicants can be 18+ years of age and can assign a proxy worker without medical documentation.

**To view the complete Council On Aging
Newsletter please visit our website:**

www.westfordma.gov/coa
and click on [Newsletters](#).



Westford Senior Center

Community Gardens

The Westford Community Gardens would like to welcome all interested gardeners to apply for a plot for the 2020 season. Prices vary based on plot size. Located at the Day Field on Graniteville Road, the garden provides growing space for registered members. Registration is open through March 15th and is first-come, first-served. Applications, plot descriptions, and garden information can be found at www.westfordma.gov/communitygardens. Please direct any questions to westford.community.gardens@gmail.com



Google (MassGIS) 2018

Recycling Commission

Results of Waste Management Recycling Audit Could Affect Town Cost



Every other week Westford residents bring their bins and totes full of their recyclable materials out to the curbside where they are whisked away for processing by our vendor, Waste Management. But what exactly is in all those recycling bins and totes? That's what Waste Management has been trying to find out. At the sorting facility in Billerica where our recycling is processed, Waste Management is conducting an audit to see exactly what makes up the material that they are taking from our town.

And why is this important? Because our town pays fees based on the types of materials we send to Waste Management. Especially important are the items we give them that are disallowed – "contamination". With the incredible upheaval in the recycling industry and the constricted markets for processed recyclables, recyclers are asking for cleaner material than ever.

For 11 days in January/February, Westford has undergone a composition audit on our recycling. This audit looks at a valid sample of material and analyzes it. We will receive details of what percentage of the material is comprised of cardboard, paper, numbered plastics, aluminum, steel, mixed glass – and what percentage must be picked out and disposed of as contamination. The volume of these categories in the mix impacts our cost, depending on the current market for the recycled materials.

We want to thank the recycling volunteers in town who have attended each audit day to observe and ask questions. They have been troopers!

Currently Westford is being billed for a "contamination percentage" of 10%, the default set by the state. The results of this audit will show the true percentage, and could mean savings for the town.

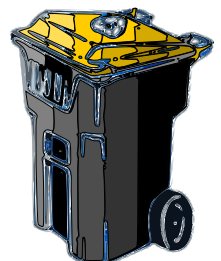
Some of the items that have showed up in the audit residue pile – a frying pan, a computer laptop cord, metal screws, an aerosol hairspray can, a food processor blade, potato chip bags, Styrofoam, a raw onion! Water bottles with more than 2 tablespoons of liquid. And lots of plastic and grocery store bags.

When we receive the official results of the audit, we will let you know. Meanwhile, please help contain our costs by educating yourself on what is supposed to be in your recycling what is not.

If you don't know, you can look it up at: www.recyclesmartma.org/

**Westford thanks you for recycling,
reducing, repurposing, and reusing!**

www.westfordma.gov/recycling



Health Department

Recently, a new coronavirus—2019 Novel (New) Coronavirus—was detected in Wuhan, China. This novel coronavirus causes a respiratory (lung) infection. As of February 10, there has been [one confirmed case](#) of this novel coronavirus in Massachusetts.

The risk to residents in Massachusetts remains low.

As of February 10, there are [12 confirmed cases in the United States](#).

While person-to-person spread among close contacts has been detected with this virus, at this time, this virus is NOT currently spreading in the community in the United States.

Although the risk to residents of Massachusetts is low, many of the things you do to help prevent colds and the flu can help protect you against other respiratory viruses:

- **Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.**
- **Stay home if you are sick.**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is working closely with the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to learn more, and will provide updated information on this website as it becomes available as well as guidance for the public. The Westford Health Department is monitoring this situation very carefully and will make sure that the most up to date information will be available to residents. You may go to <https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov#-overview-> for the most up to date information or contact the Health Department at 978-692-5509 or log onto the website at <https://www.westfordma.gov/215/Health-Department>



2019 nCoV CORONAVIRUS

HEALTH ALERT: *Travelers from China*
There is an outbreak of respiratory illness in China.

Travelers are required to be monitored for up to 14 days after leaving China.

Travelers should stay home and monitor their health within this 14-day period.
A health official will contact you to give additional instructions.

Take your temperature with a thermometer 2 times a day and watch your health.

If you develop a fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), cough, or have difficulty breathing:

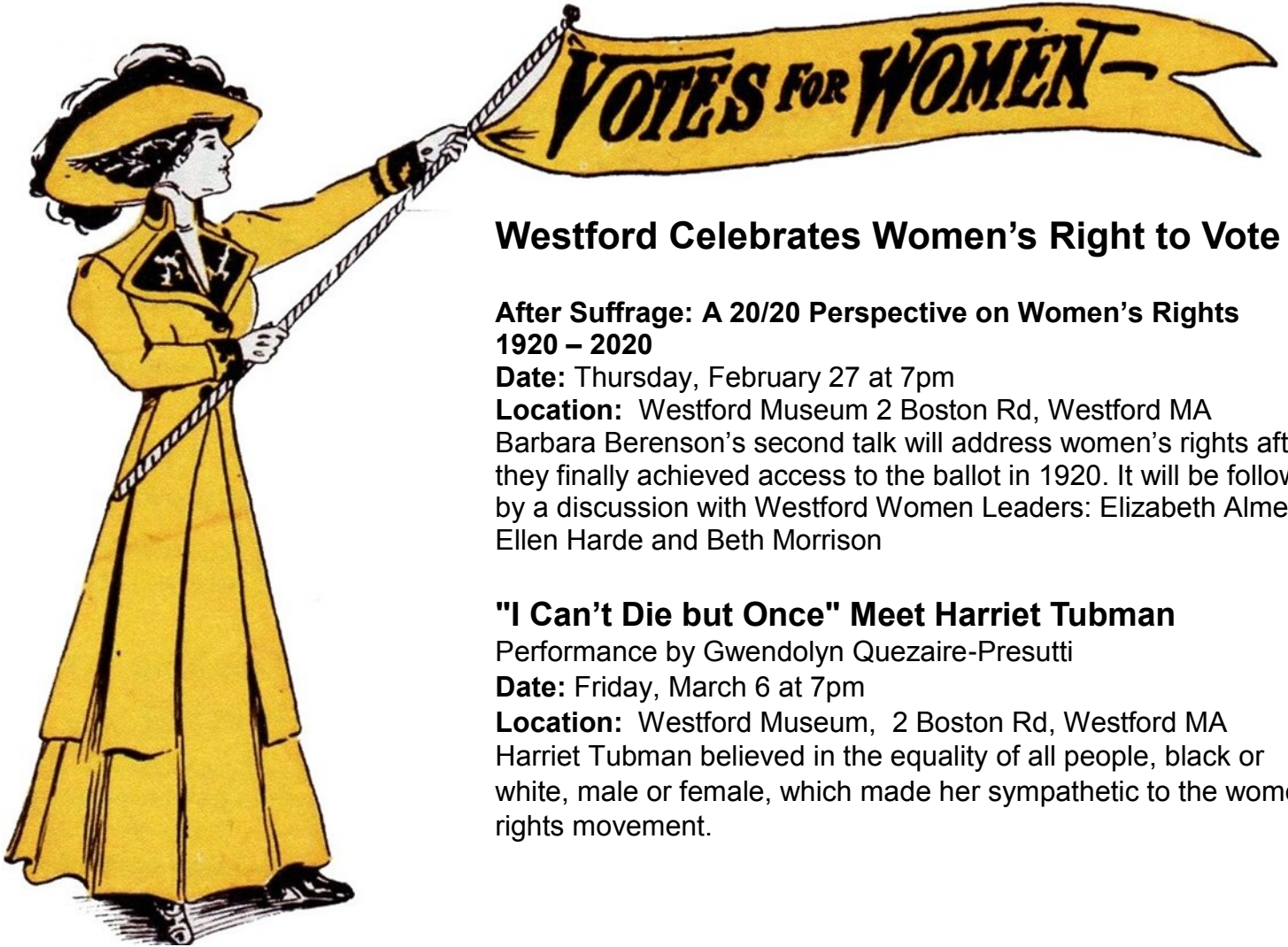
- Call your health department for advice before seeking care.
- If you can't reach your health department, call ahead before going to a doctor's office or emergency room.
- Tell them your symptoms and that you were in China.

www.cdc.gov/nCoV

The Westford Historical Society and Museum

in partnership with the

***League of Women Voters of Westford
and Westford Cultural Council***



Westford Celebrates Women's Right to Vote

**After Suffrage: A 20/20 Perspective on Women's Rights
1920 – 2020**

Date: Thursday, February 27 at 7pm

Location: Westford Museum 2 Boston Rd, Westford MA

Barbara Berenson's second talk will address women's rights after they finally achieved access to the ballot in 1920. It will be followed by a discussion with Westford Women Leaders: Elizabeth Almeida, Ellen Harde and Beth Morrison

"I Can't Die but Once" Meet Harriet Tubman

Performance by Gwendolyn Quezaire-Presutti

Date: Friday, March 6 at 7pm

Location: Westford Museum, 2 Boston Rd, Westford MA

Harriet Tubman believed in the equality of all people, black or white, male or female, which made her sympathetic to the women's rights movement.

"I Now Pronounce You Lucy Stone"

Performance by Judith Kalaora

Date: Thursday, March 19 at 7pm

Location: Westford Museum, 2 Boston Rd, Westford MA

Judith Kalaora as Lucy Stone describes the tension of Antebellum Boston. Her message inspired thousands to join the suffrage movement; even Susan B. Anthony credited Lucy's impassioned speeches for her involvement. Suitable for all ages.